

The ~~June 1997~~ ^{JUN 10 1997} ~~ED~~ ^{LIBRARY - P.A.O.I.} Bion

A merely parochial publication for *members only* of St. Mark's Parish, Denver, Colorado.
The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, Western Rite Vicariate.

The Christians were first called Catholic at Antioch! (St. Ignatius' *Epistle to the Smyrnians* 8.2)

St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea,
A.D. 330-379. Ordination Date: 14 June

THAT PRAYER IS TO BE PLACED BEFORE ALL THINGS,

Constitutiones Monasticae, (Monastic Constitutions) C. 1.

DEARLY Beloved, each word and deed of Our Saviour Jesus Christ is for us a lesson in virtue and piety. For this end also did He assume our nature, so that every man and every woman, contemplating as in a picture the practice of all virtue and piety, might strive with all their hearts to imitate His example. For this He bore our body, so that as far as we could we might repeat within us the manner of His Life. And so therefore, when you hear mention of some word or deed of His, take care not to receive it simply as something that incidentally happened, but raise your mind upwards towards the sublimity of what He is teaching, and strive to see what has been mystically handed down to us. Martha did indeed welcome the Lord; but Mary sat at His feet. In each sister was an earnest good will. Yet note what each does. Martha served Him by preparing what would be needed for the refreshment of His Body; Mary, seated at His feet, listened to His words. The one ministered to the visible man; the other bowed down before the Invisible. And the Lord Who was there as both God and Man was pleased with the good dispositions of both women.

But Martha, busy with her task cried out to the Lord to speak for her to her sister, that she should come and help her. *Speak to her therefore, she says, that she may get up and help me.* But the Lord said to her: *Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her* (Lk. x. 38-42). We have not come here for this purpose, to sit at ease at the table, to fill our stomachs. We are here

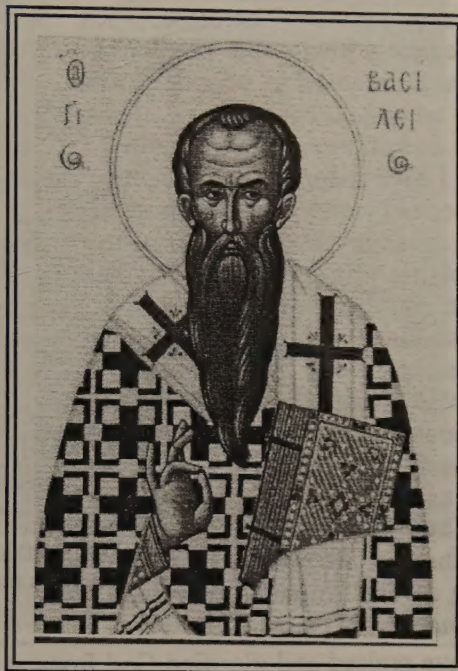
to nourish you, with the word of truth, and by the contemplation of heavenly mysteries. Yet though He did not turn the one away from her task, He praised the other because of that to which she had devoted herself.

Here we see the two states placed before us by means of the two women; the lower, choosing to serve Him in corporeal ministrations which also is most profitable, and that which, ascending to the contemplation of the sacred mysteries is the more spiritual. Take these things

spiritually, you who listen, and choose that which you wish. And should you choose the way of service, render your service in the Name of Christ. For He said: *As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it unto me* (Mt. xxv. 40). And so whether you receive the stranger, or feed the poor, or comfort the afflicted, or give help to those who are in need and in pain, or take care of the sick,

Christ receives your service as bestowed on Him. But should you choose to imitate Mary, who, putting aside the service of bodily need ascended to the contemplation of the divine glories, seek truly to do this. Leave the body, leave the tilling of the earth, and the preparation of what is eaten with bread. Sit at the feet of the Lord, and give your mind to His words, that you may become a sharer of the mysteries of the divine nature which Christ reveals. For to contemplate that which Christ teaches is a work above the service of corporal need.

2. You have then, Beloved, received both divine teaching and an example of life. Strive for whichever you will, and be either a servant of the needy of this world, or a zealous lover of the words of Christ. And if it be that you strive after both, then from both gather the fruit of salvation. But the spiritual motive is the first, all the rest come second; *For Mary*, He says, *has chosen the better part*. If then you would enter in to the mysteries of Christ, let you sit by His feet, and receive His Gospel, and abandoning your way of life let you live apart from men and free from all concern let you have no further thought for your body, and then you will be enabled to enter into mystic converse with Him in contemplation of His truth, and so imitate Mary, and gain the highest glory.



And when you pray, see that you ask not for what is alien to your life, and provoke the Lord. Ask not for money, nor for human glory, nor power, nor for any of the things that pass away. But seek for the kingdom of God, and all that is needed for your body will be provided; as the Lord Himself has said: *Seek ye the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things will be added unto you* (Mt. vi. 33).

Twofold, Beloved, are the methods of prayer. One is to give praise to God from a humble heart; the other, the lower, is the prayer of petition. Therefore, when you pray, do not immediately begin with petitions, otherwise you may then be accused of praying to God only when in need. So when you come to pray, leave self behind, leave wife and children. Let the earth go, and rise up to heaven. Leave behind every creature, the visible and the invisible, and begin with the praise and glory of Him Who has made all things. And as often as you offer Him praise be not wandering here and there in your mind. And choose not your words from fables, like the Greeks, but from the holy Scriptures, and say: O Lord, patient and forbearing, I praise Thee because Thou hast spared me who offend Thee daily; giving to all a season for repentance; and because of this Thou art silent, and art patient with us, O Lord, that we may offer glory and praise to Thee who hast care for the salvation of all men. Thou dost help us, now by fear, now by counsel, now through the prophets, and last of all through the coming of Thy Anointed, *For thou hast made us, and not we ourselves* (Ps. xcix. 3).

3. And when you have praised and glorified God from the Scriptures, with all your heart, then begin with humility to say: Lord, I am not worthy to praise Thee, for I have sinned most grievously. And though you may not be conscious of any fault, yet so must you speak to Him. For save God alone there is no one without sin. We commit many sins, and the greater part of them we forget. Because of this the Apostle said: *I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet I am not thereby justified* (I Cor. iv. 4); that is, I have committed many sins, and taken no notice of them. And because of this the prophet also says: *Who can understand sins?* (Ps. xviii. 13). So you do not speak falsely when you say you are a sinner. And if you do know that you are one, you also sin when you say: I am not a sinner. Say rather: I have sinned more than other sinners, for I have broken the commandment which says: *When you have done all things commanded of you, say: we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do* (Lk. xvii. 10). So must you think to yourself: I am a profitless servant.

And again: *In humility let each esteem others better than himself* (Phil. ii. 3). Pray to the Lord therefore with fear and with humility. And when you pray to Him from a humble heart let you say: I give Thee thanks, O Lord, because Thou hast borne with my sins in patience, and hast left me even till now without chastisement. For I have long deserved to suffer many afflictions; and to

be banished from Thy sight; but Thy most clement mercy has borne with me in patience. I thank Thee again, although I am unable to render Thee such thanks as are due Thy mercy.

And when you have fulfilled in turn the duty of praise and of humility, then ask for what you ought to ask for; not for riches, as I said, not for the glory of this earth, not for health of body: for He made you and your health is His care and He knows which state is profitable to each one, to be healthy or to be infirm. But let you seek, as He has told us, for the kingdom of heaven. For, as I said before, He will provide for your body's needs. For our King is of infinite dignity, and it is unfitting that anyone should ask of Him what is not becoming. Be mindful therefore when you pray that you do not bring upon yourself the anger of God, but seek from Him the things that are worthy of God our King. And when you pray for the things that are worthy of being asked of God, cease not from praying till you receive them. For the Lord has intimated this to us where He says in the Gospel: *Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him: friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine is come off his journey to me, and I have not what to set before him. And he from within should answer, and say: Trouble me not, the door is now set shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity, he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth* (Lk. xi. 5-8).

4. Our Lord puts this example before us to teach us that we should be strong and persistent in faith. He takes the example of one man's prayer to another man, that you may learn never to be discouraged, so that when you pray and do not receive the answer to your prayer, you should not cease from praying till you do receive it; provided that, as I said, you ask for what God wishes you to ask. And do not say: I am a sinner, and therefore He does not listen to me. That you may not lose heart on this account He says to us: *Although he will not give him because he is a friend; yet because of his importunity he will give him as many as he needs.*

So henceforth, if a month goes by, or a year, or three years, or four, or many years, do not give up praying till you receive what you ask for but ask on in faith, and be at the same time steadfast in doing good. It will happen often that someone in his youth strives earnestly for chastity. Then pleasure begins to undermine his resolution, desires awaken his nature, he grows weak in prayer, wine overcomes his youth, modesty perishes, and the man becomes another man. So we change because we have not with high courage of soul stood firm against our passions. It behoves us therefore to resist all things, yet we must cry out to God, that He may bring us aid.

For if a man through folly gives way to evil desires, and betrays himself to his enemies, God will not aid him,

nor hear him, because through sin he has turned away from God. He who hopes to be helped by God should have no part with what is unworthy. But he who does not betray what he owes to God will never be in want of the divine aid. It is just and fitting that in nothing should we be condemned by our own conscience. Only then

may we cry out for divine aid and cry earnestly, and not with minds wandering here and there. For one who so prays, not alone shall he continue unheard by God, but he will also provoke the Lord yet more. For if a man stands in the presence of a king, and speaks with him, he will stand there with great trepidation of mind, careful not to let either his eyes or his mind go wandering. With what greater fear and trembling should we stand in

the presence of God, having our whole mind intent on Him alone, and on nothing else whatsoever? For He beholds our inward life, not merely the outward one which men see.

Standing then in God's Presence, in a manner truly worthy, and laying before Him all the desires of your heart, cease not to pray till you receive what you ask for. But should your conscience tell you that you are praying unworthily, and should you stand in prayer while your mind goes wandering when you could well pray with recollection, then venture not to stand thus in the presence of the Lord for fear your prayer becomes an offence. Should it be however that your soul has become weak through sin, and that you are unable to pray without distraction, strive with yourself as best you can, striving manfully before the Lord, having your mind steadfast on Him, and calling upon Him, and God will have compassion on you, since it is not because of indifference but through infirmity that you cannot pray as you ought when you kneel before God. Let him who so strives with himself in every good work cease not to pray till he obtains what he asks for; but in making his request let him knock patiently at the door: *For everyone, He says, that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened;* for that which you desire to obtain, what is it but salvation in God?

5. Do you desire to know, Beloved, how the saints endured in patience, and yielded not to despair? The Lord called Abraham when he was still a young man, and brought him out of the land of the Assyrians into Palestine, and said to him: *I shall give this land to thee, and to thy seed after thee, and as the stars of heaven*

shall thy seed be, which shall not be numbered (Gen. xiii. 15, 16). And the number of his many years went on, and his nature died, and death stood by his door, and yet he did not say: 'Lord, You promised me many children, and You foretold that I would be the father of many peoples. And the impulses of nature have withered away, and to my wife because of her age nothing remains of the nature of woman. So Your prophecy was false. For what hope have



Llandanwg Church, Wales. Founded in the 5th Century by St. Tanwg. This peaceful church nestles in the sand dunes at Llandanwg Beach and is lit only by natural daylight and oil lamps.

we since we are both old?' But he did not say this, nor did he think it in his heart, but remained unshaken in faith; and while his body grew old, his hope grew young. As his body became weaker and gave him grounds for despairing, his faith gave strength to his soul and his body. 'It is God,' he said, 'who has promised. He is the Lord of nature; otherwise it could not come to pass. It is He Who makes possible what is impossible; for He has made all things; and all that is He changes as He wills.

Imitate the faith of Abraham. After his nature had withered, and its powers were at an end, then the promise of the Lord took life. Let us consider ourselves, for example. We pray earnestly for a year; and then we cease. We fast for two years; and then we cease to fast. Let us not grow faint in face of the promise of God. For He Who promised this man that his seed would be multiplied has promised us that He will give us what we ask for. For He says: *Come to me, all you that labour, and are burthened, and I will refresh you* (Mt. xi. 28). For when you were far from Him He pitied you as you toiled under the weary burthen of your sins, and called you and relieved you of it, and then gave you rest. And you, have you no faith in Him? Even should we keep silence our conscience would not suffer us. For we do not doubt that He has power to relieve us; but we care not to take upon us His yoke, which is light and sweet; nor enter by the narrow way to the kingdom of heaven, but

prefer rather to carry the burthen of our sins, and to walk by the broad way of the pleasures of the senses, and to enter in at the wide gate that leads to destruction.

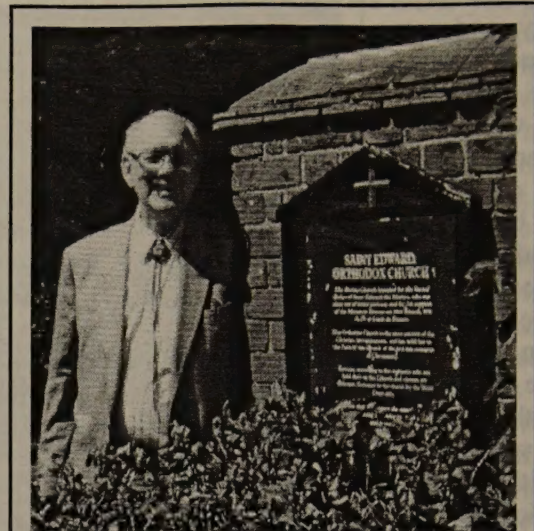
But, you will say, how often have I prayed, and I have not been answered? Because you have always prayed badly; either without faith, or with a distracted mind, or for the things that were not expedient for you. And if at times you prayed for what was expedient for you, you did not persevere. For it is written: *In patience shall you possess your souls* (Lk. xxi. 19), and again: *He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved* (Mt. x. 22).

6. God sees into the hearts of those who pray. What need then, someone will say, that we should ask God for what we need? Does He not know already what we need? Why then should we pray? God does indeed know what things we need, and with generosity provides all we need for the refreshment of our bodies, and since He is good He sends down His rains upon the just and the unjust alike, and causes His sun to shine upon the good and the bad (Mt. v. 45), even before we ask Him. But faith, and the power of virtue, and the kingdom of heaven these you will not receive unless you ask for them in labouring and steadfastness.

We must first long for these things. Then when you desire them you must strive with all your heart to obtain them, seeking them with a sincere heart, with patience, and with faith, not being condemned by your conscience, as praying without attention or without reverence, and so in time, when God wills, you will obtain your request. For He knows better than you when these things are expedient for you. And perhaps He is delaying in giving them to you, designing to keep your attention fixed upon Him; and also that you may know that this is a gift of God, and may safeguard with fear what is given to you. For what we come by with much labour we are zealous to defend; as losing it we lose also our labour; and treating lightly the gift of God we become unworthy of life eternal. For what did it profit Solomon so quickly to receive the gift of wisdom and then lose it?

7. Do not then lose heart if you do not speedily obtain your request. For if it were known to Our Good Master that were you at once to receive this favour that you would not lose it, He would have been prepared to give it to you unasked. But being concerned for you, He does not do this. For if he who received a single talent, and hid it safely, was condemned because he did not put it to profit, how much more would he have been condemned had he lost it? Keeping this in mind, let us continue to give thanks to the Lord whether we receive speedily or slowly that which we pray for. For all things whatsoever the Lord may do He orders all to the end of our salvation; only let us not through faintheartedness cease from our prayers. It was because of this the Lord spoke the parable of the Widow who persuaded the judge through her steadfastness (Lk. xviii. 2-5): that we also through our steadfastness in prayer may obtain what we ask for.

By this we also show our faith, and our love of God, since though we do not quickly receive what we ask for, yet we remain steadfast in praising Him and giving thanks. Then let us give Him thanks at all times, so that we may be found worthy of receiving His everlasting gifts; since to Him all praise and glory is due for ever and ever. *Amen.*



Prof. Ed. Oppermann at the monastery of St. Edward Martyr in Surrey, England.

For Graduations, Anniversaries, and plain old summer Reading, shop at the St. Mark's Bookstore. Crosses, Icons, and Books make thoughtful gifts which represent intelligence and piety which reflects well on all concerned.



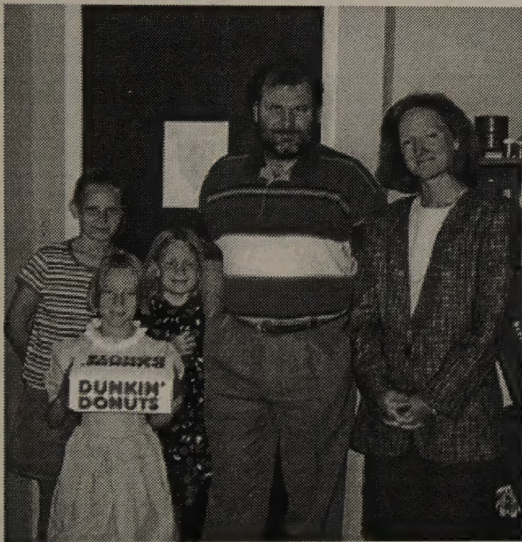
Jody Oppermann at the Church of St. Edward Martyr, Surrey, England.



The Revd. Fr. Donald W. Lloyd, D.D. with Mr. Jack Davis III as they prepare the agenda for the World Summit Conference to be held in Denver in June '97.



The Vestry at their May meeting : Pam Howlett, Jane Long, Nancy Stuart Steffen, Peggy Matsch, Mike Huseby, Ron Lickteig, Rick Murray, Stephen Greenlee, JCC+ & Ted Eklund.



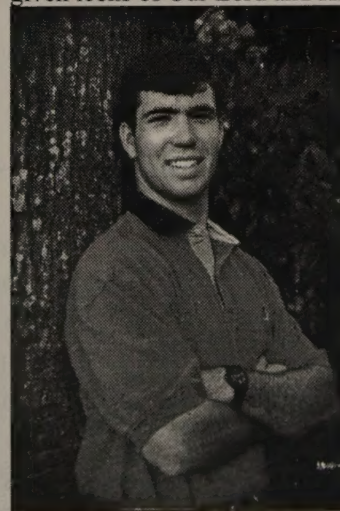
Church School Teachers Tom Colbert & Margaret Murray with the Colbert Scholars, Karen, Helen, and Janet. Karen raised the most money for "Food for Hungry People" by putting in her birthday money.



In thanksgiving for the marriage of her brother General Charles "Hondo" Campbell and his bride Dianne, Mat. Deborah has given icons of Our Lord and His Mother for the Parish Hall.

Mat. Deborah's nephew, James Campbell IV, received "Most Outstanding Senior" from the faculty at Loyola College Prep School, Shreveport, LA. He was chosen because of his high grades, trustworthiness, courteousness, sportsmanship, community service, and Christian values.

His Grace, Bishop Basil & the clergy brotherhood of the SouthWest Region, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, with the blessing of Metropolitan Philip, invite you to the *St. John Chrysostom Homiletics Conference* 29 September - October 1, 1997 (Monday - Wednesday) at the beautiful 750 acre Glen Eyrie Retreat, West of Colorado Springs, Colorado.



June 1997

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

1 V Easter (Rogation Sunday) W 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Mass 9:15 AM Church School 10:00 AM Mass 4:00 PM Evensong	2 Ss. Marcellinus, Peter & Erasmus, Martyrs of Lyon St. Odo of Canterbury	3 St. Kevin of Glendalough, Ab	4 Vigil of the Ascension 11:45 AM MP & MASS 7:00 PM Salt & Light Concert	5 Ascension Day St. Constantine of Kiev (1159) 9:00 AM MASS 7:00 PM Mass	6 S. Gudwall of Wales, B. C. 9:00 AM MASS	7 S. Colman of Dromore, B.C. Ss. Peter, Walabons, & Comp. Martyrs in Spain 9:00 AM MASS 4:00 PM RADIO Orthodoxy 710 AM Dial 5:00 PM Evensong
8 Ascension Sunday W 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Mass 9:15 AM Church School 10:00 AM Mass 4:00 PM Evensong	9 St. Columba of Iona, Ab.	10 Ithamar, Bishop of Rochester	11 St. Barnabas the Apostle 11:45 AM MP & MASS	12 Octave of Ascension 9:00 AM MASS	13 S. Aquilina, V.Martyr S. Ragnbert (Rembert) Martyr 9:00 AM MASS	14 St. Basil the Great, BCD (also 1 January) 9:00 AM MASS 4:00 PM RADIO Orthodoxy 710 AM Dial 5:00 PM Evensong
SW Region Parish Life Conference, Omaha 18-21 June						
15 Whitsunday (Pentecost) R 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Mass 9:15 AM Church School 10:00 AM Mass 4:00 PM Evensong	16 Whit Monday	17 Whit Tuesday	18 Ember Day in Pentecost SW Regional Conf.	19 Thursday in Pentecost SW Regional Conf.	20 Ember Day in Pentecost SW Regional Conf.	21 Ember Day in Pentecost SW Regional Conf. Julian of Tarsus, M 4:00 PM RADIO Orthodoxy 710 AM Dial
Orthodox Christian Youth Camp, Glacier, Colorado, ages 11-18						
22 Trinity Sunday W 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Mass 9:15 AM Church School 10:00 AM Mass 4:00 PM Evensong	23 St. Alban, first English Martyr Audrev (Etheldreda) Abbess of Ely	24 Nativity of St. John Baptist (bonfire blessing)	25 St. Lua of Lismore, Ab 11:45 AM MP & MASS	26 Corpus Christi 9:00 AM MASS	27 Ss. Basilides, Cyinus, Nabot & Nazarius, Mm 9:00 AM MASS	28 St. Ireneaus of Lyons, BM 9:00 AM MASS 4:00 PM RADIO Orthodoxy 710 AM Dial 5:00 PM Evensong
29 Ss. Peter & Paul, Apostles R St. Peter of Rostov (1290) wonderworker 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Mass 9:15 AM Church School 10:00 AM Mass 4:00 PM Evensong	30 St. Paul the Apostle	Birthdays: Anders Jeffrey 6/2, Kathryn Huft 6/7, Wm Matsch 6/10, Annabelle Walker 6/11, Jane Gray 6/11, Chs Voigt 6/13, William Banta 6/15, Helen Colbert 6/19, Janet Colbert 6/22, J Armstrong 6/22, Jean Keathley 6/23, Dick Russell 6/25, Eliz Eckstein 6/27				

The Cloister Walk

A Book Review by Susan Eklund

Creator and, by this declaration, elevates the mundane. The mandate of St Benedict is *Ora et Labora*, "prayer and work." Making work a prayer is the specialty of Benedictines. In this spirit, Ms. Norris makes her poetry and writing a prayer,

recognizing the difficulty of expressing Christian ideas in the world. For our part, we claim St Benedict as the founder of western-rite monasticism. He lived before the schism, and his Rule is entirely Orthodox, bearing many similarities to the ideas and practices of the early desert fathers.

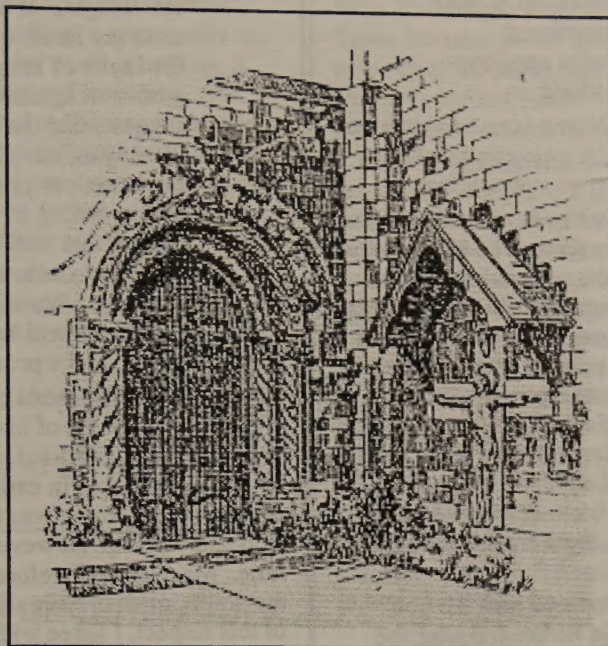
As Ms. Norris points out, the chant (Gregorian, of course,) is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Hours. The Liturgy of the Hours is a different way of referring to the Divine office and the *Lectio Divina*. Her discussion on Chant reveals that it is much more forgiving, more open and accepting than most people think. In her chapter devoted to "The Gregorian Brain" she states:

As a contemporary monk has written, this may explain why "the ritual chanting of sacred texts

contributes in a unique way to a profound, largely subliminal, absorption and engagement having many more dimensions than mere rational understanding" It also might help explain the current popularity of Gregorian chant albums among people who have very little ritual life, or who have grown weary of what the monk term "poor talkative Christianity."

Although most of her book is readily accessible from an Orthodox viewpoint, there are nonetheless a few stumbling blocks. One was a disturbing chapter on the shedding of the habit by Benedictine sisters. In the sixties and seventies when some women were burning their bras; Roman sisters, Benedictine and not, were similarly "burning their habits." When I realized that the late medieval styles and attitudes contributed to the appearance and design of the habit, I found her commentary informative but not necessarily edifying. Ms. Norris attempts to do credit to both sides of the debate concerning female monastic dress, but she seems unable to separate her treatment of the topic from modern feminist ideology such as "Steinem-ism." She abandons the ancient spiritual legacy of rising above the sexual self. In an atmosphere of self actualization, sexism and feminism ultimately cannot exist. As one nun put it "No one ever stopped me on the street to ask me for prayers. This was not because I was not a woman of prayer, but because no one could tell that I was a woman of prayer." One hopes that Benedictine women will come to a deeper understanding of the origin and function of any formal habit. Yet in her chapter "A Glorious Robe" she gives a firm yet, well-deserved, admonition to the fashion mavens of our day, for stealing the monastic habit and corrupting it.

I guess I'm sad for the rest of us. Even if we're not likely to be suckered into believing as *Vogue* magazine breathlessly exclaimed last summer, "spiritual equanimity . . . is only a credit card receipt away," the fact that such a thing can be said at all should give us pause. Told (*Vogue* again) that the somber colors



A WALK IN THE PARK in my hometown takes you on a path around a cloistered monastery for women. It is a quiet, mysterious place and even small boys on bikes sense the holiness of it. On that length of the path, there are never whimpers from strollers, and adult chatter is tempered. Although only part of the path borders the park property, the sanctity of the place fills the whole park.

It was with this perspective that I approached *The Cloister Walk*, by Kathleen Norris. In what appears at first just another monastic commentary, it unfolds to show a true kinship to the Benedictine Community at large. In *Cloister Walk*, Ms. Norris seems to know enough to give us small helpings, written so that they are easy to swallow. One does not have to explore monasticism to gain insight from *The Cloister Walk*.

Ms. Norris is what is known as an *oblate*. An oblate is a person living in the world, but one who also carries on a spiritual life within the Benedictine practices of *Lectio Divina* (divine reading) and prayer. She has a Protestant background, generally, but has embraced the Benedictine way during her adult life. As a poet, she was granted a fellowship at the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, St. John's Monastery, in Collegeville, Minnesota. Since Ms. Norris lives in the world, she is adept at bridging the spiritual gap often experienced when pursuing any higher spirituality. Because of her exposure to both liberal and conservative Benedictines, she is able to show both sides of the issues discussed in her book. Her experience is mostly with Roman Catholic monastics, so she engages the implications of Vatican II and the changes that came along with it. In most of her discussions, however, the pure Benedictine values override ecumenical divisions and makes what she says readily accessible for most Orthodox readers.

St Benedict lived around 480-550 A.D. He forsook life as a "rich kid" and chose to live as a hermit in the mountains in Italy. His holy ways attracted a group of disciples. His sister, St Scholastica, also chose the way of the recluse. The documentation for St Benedict's monastic rule was set forth by his disciple, St Gregory the Great, the originator of Gregorian chant. Benedict presents one of the first organized Rules in the western part of the one true Church. Within the Rule, the Liturgical hours of the day are strictly specified, even to which psalms are to be read at each office. Our own "Morning" (Lauds/Prime) and "Evening" (Vespers) prayer find their basis in this Benedictine model. The spirit of the Rule of St Benedict is essentially hospitality and charity to all. This attitude includes generosity of spirit to those we encounter every day. It declares the holiness in all created things, praising that which is given by the

and clean, even severe, lines of the new fashions constitute a "burial for the conspicuous luxury of the eighties," we have to rely on brain cells battered for years by advertisers and politicians to recognize that this burial is false: we're expected to express our newfound austerity by engaging in still more consumption of ever more expensive clothing.

In pointing out such travesty, Ms. Norris is to be applauded for speaking to our highest ideal. She is a welcome relief from the "Melrose Place" standards that infect us at every turn.

The Orthodox monastic sisterhood has been more fortunate. In early Christianity, stories abound of women who cut their hair short and took the man's habit to live the spiritual lives to which they felt they were called. The current Orthodox habit is very similar for men as for women, although women do wear a veil on their head. Both men and women wear what is called in Russia, a Klobuk, or "hat" with a veil attached. It almost seems that the historical development of the Orthodox church helped keep the simplicity of the habit for women. The rise of Islam in most Orthodox areas precluded anything highly stylized. Unlike the western habits, which, developed in the context of local styles and specific order, there are few modifications.

Interspersed throughout the several topics which the book engages are reflections on the author's life, before and after she became a Benedictine oblate, on the lives of the saints, and on the works of some Christian poets. Several of the chapters are essays reprinted from a variety of periodicals. Among them is a chapter on the apocalypse. In true orthodox form, our author differentiates lucidly between the function of metaphor and the interpretation of the Book of Revelation or The Apocalypse. She points out clearly, that he who hears of the apocalypse is blessed, but the subject does not make for easy listening. We are a culture, she agrees, which worships' comfort, and that is why the challenging nature of the images of apocalypse are so very important.

[Metaphor] . . . defies our denial of whatever is unpleasant or uncontrollable....I know how unpleasant, even scary metaphor can be. It doesn't surprise me that people try to control it in whatever way they can, the fundamentalists with literal interpretations of prophetic and apocalyptic texts that deny the import of its metaphorical language, the liberals by attempting to eliminate metaphoric images of plague, punishment, the heavenly courts, martyrdom, and even the cross-that might be deemed offensive, depressing, or judgmental.

She also reminds us that the definition of apocalypse is simply "to reveal or to uncover" and that catastrophic implications are not necessarily at the heart of the message. The message is rather one of hope and renewal. She confesses that she likes any story with dragons in it, (Barney not included.)

....I thought I had to choose between literature and religion. It was my encounter with the Benedictines, after I had apprenticed as a writer for many years, that taught me otherwise. Much to my surprise their daily liturgy and lectio profoundly intensified my sense of metaphor as essential to our capacity to hope, and to dream (not to mention to transcend the

banalities of the Barney song). And it was free for the asking.

Dragons within, dragons without. Evil so pervasive that only the poetry of apocalypse can imagine its defeat. And to do that it takes us to the limits of metaphor, of human sense, the limits of imagining and understanding. It pushes us against all our boundaries and suggests that the end of our control- our ideologies, our plans, our competence, our expertise, our professionalism, our power- is the beginning of God's reign. It asks us to believe that only the good remains, at the end, and directs us toward carefully tending it here and now. We will sing a new song. Singing and praise will be all that remains. ...That's a vision, and a promise, I can live with.

Ms. Norris also deals openly with the mystery of the spoken Word; and the value of listening rather than intellectualizing the Word of God. This kind of encouragement is also within the Orthodox tradition. In early Christian times, most people were illiterate, so listening was the way they experienced the Word of God and worship. However, in our age, most people can read a little. Ms. Norris therefore suggests that there is real decline in the ability or desire simply to listen to the Word of the Gospel. In this respect, I agree with the author. We have lost some of the poetry of worship, and that is problematic.

In our own church, even juggling the hymnal and a prayer book is sometimes quite a task. In some families, mine included, children were encouraged to follow the liturgy in the prayer book. But we memorized the specific prayers and patterns of worship as children, to be free of the book. Children love to listen instead. As adults, we are inclined to follow along, as if that way we won't be asked to listen quite so intentionally. Some of us learned this in school and perhaps were never read to as youngsters. Reading aloud or story-telling works the same way as the psalmody used in Benedictine practice. With the rising illiteracy rate in our society, the practice of story-telling is gaining a new popularity. We now see story-tellers at nearly every local street fair; they share tales of peoples and their cultures. (As an Orthodox Christian, how often do you hear stories about your people?) These tellers of tales fulfill a need, not just to recount stories as such, but to stimulate and inspire the imagination of the heart. Without the verbal recounting of the Gospels and stories of the life of Christ and the Theotokos, the faith would have been lost and could be at risk again. The story-telling traditions seem to be lost to us in the western church. They continued, in monasteries and local festivals, through the middle ages in the form of pageants often performed throughout the liturgical year, especially on Corpus Christi Day. This is the tradition continued in the musical style known as Oratorio, i.e. The Messiah. Story-telling survives in some Protestant denominations, replacing the liturgy. Even our Lord used the parable to teach. There is an excellent example of the practice of story-telling in the Eastern Rite. On the third Sunday of Advent, a portion of the Protoevangelion of James is read. This story is called the Gospel of the Life of Mary and has been used every year on that Sunday for centuries. We know that it was known to St Jerome in the West. It is accepted as authentic and was one of the books considered when the Septuagint Bible we know today was codified in the 5th century. How many of us are willing to lend an ear to such a story, especially when it occurs in the Liturgy? In Benedictine practice, the lives of the

saints of the day are recounted after the office. They walk the slender line between theater and story-telling to reveal holiness.


Ms. Norris' commentary tells of life in cities and in the country, in monasteries and in "literary hothouses." She approaches subjects such as transcending time as "chronos," Man's measure of time, and managing to keep a perspective on both chronos and kairos, God's time. Her work is nothing if not far ranging, but it is also heart-filling and inspiring. She speaks of metanoia, a turning of the mind to the reconsideration of the soul's health and the promotion of spiritual growth, and does so in a way which we as westerners can appreciate. At the same time she draws spiritual sustenance from our orthodox roots in the words of the early desert fathers and mothers.

I highly recommend *The Cloister Walk* to anyone who wants to explore western spirituality, past and present. Ms. Norris, the oblate & the poet speaks to our hearts and thus to our needs.

The Cloister Walk was published in 1996 by Riverhead Books, a division of G.P. Putnam's Sons.

The Cloister Walk is available at St. Mark's Bookstore for \$12.

Saint Oda "The Good" of Canterbury Feast Day June 2

 UR holy father Oda was born in East Anglia, of Danish parents. His father had been a soldier in the Great Army that killed the holy martyr-king Edmund, and was opposed to his son's Christian leanings. So Oda left father and mother and all his possessions to attach himself to a pious man named Ethelhelm, who adopted him as his son and taught him the Christian Faith.

Once Ethelhelm and Oda were on a pilgrimage to Rome. Suddenly the elder had a heart-attack. Oda resorted to prayer, and then gave his teacher a cup of wine over which he had made the sign of the Cross. On drinking the wine, Ethelhelm immediately recovered. News of this miracle reached the ears of the king, as a result of which Oda, who was already a priest, was consecrated to the see of Ramsbury in Wiltshire.

This was in about 925. In 936, Oda was sent by King Athelstan to France to negotiate the restoration of Louis, the son of Emperor Charles the Simple, who was then exiled in England. In 937, Bishop Oda was present at the battle of Brunanburgh, where by his prayers King Athelstan's sword was miraculously repaired, thereby saving his life.

In 942, Oda was appointed archbishop of Canterbury, having become a monk at Fleury-sur-Loire shortly before. As archbishop, Oda showed much courage and wisdom. He encouraged monasticism, issued decrees promoting good morals and asserted the independence of the Church from secular authorities.

St. Oda was once celebrating the Divine Liturgy with tears as was his custom, when he saw a drop of blood flowing from the consecrated Gifts. Amazed and struck with fear, he called a priest and showed him the miracle secretly. "You should rejoice, highest father," said the priest, "for today Christ the Son of God has honoured you, that He Who is blessed above all should have counted you worthy to see this with your bodily eyes. And now I beseech the power of the ineffable God to return this His Body to its original form." And when he had prayed, he arose, and found it as before, and partook of it with reverence.

After the Liturgy, all the poor, the pilgrims, the orphans and the widows were brought together and given food to the glory of that great miracle.

Oda also greatly embellished his cathedral church at Canterbury. He brought to it the relics of St. Wilfrid from the ruins of Ripon Minster (at the same time commissioning the writing of a new life of the saint), and completely renovated and enlarged the structure erected by St. Augustine. It is said that during the repairs to the cathedral, no rain at all fell on the city.

One of his last acts was to consecrate St. Dunstan to the episcopate. For when King Edwy died, and his brother Edgar ascended the throne of Wessex, he immediately recalled Dunstan from exile. And at a witan (parliament) held at Bradford-on-Avon, ~by the choice of all Dunstan was consecrated bishop, especially so that he might constantly be in the royal presence on account of his farseeing and prudent counsels.~ During the service, however, St. Oda paused at the point where the church to which the new bishop is to be appointed is declared, and, to the astonishment of all, named him bishop of the metropolitan see of Canterbury. quietly resisting the objections of those around him, he said: "I know, dearly beloved, what God has spoken in me." The holy prelate said this through the Holy Spirit, foreseeing the grace that was to fill Dunstan. For although Dunstan, after his consecration, was sent to the see of Worcester, in two years' time he was archbishop of Canterbury.

St. Oda reposed on June 2, 958, being called "the Good" by St. Dunstan, who never passed his tomb without kneeling. He was succeeded by Elfsin, bishop of Winchester, a man of very different character. One day, Elfsin was standing over Oda's tomb, and addressed him, saying: Behold, O bishop, here you lie prostrate, and I enjoy the rights of victory. While you were alive I did not obtain them, but now that you are dead, I have taken them.. Then he disdainfully struck the tomb with his staff and went away. That same night, the weather was very bad. And St. Oda, clothed in hierarchical vestments, appeared to a certain priest and said to him: "Go to the bishop and diligently ask him why he mocked me yesterday and struck me with his staff." On awaking, however, the priest forgot the words of the saint. Again St. Oda appeared to him and repeated the same words. Again the priest kept silent out of fear. On the third night the saint came to him and reproached him for his slothfulness, adding: "If you wish to preserve the prosperity of this sweet life of yours that you now enjoy, tell your bishop what you have heard." Taking courage from the saint's words, the priest went to the bishop, prostrated himself at his feet, and said: "There came to me, not Gabriel, the Virgin's messenger, but that glorious Oda, your predecessor, who ordered me to say these words to your Eminence with indignation: "Since you despised me yesterday in word and deed, I tell you that you will cross the sea and climb the mountains, but in no wise will you sit upon the apostolic throne." The bishop dismissed this as an idle dream. But the prophecy was fulfilled to the letter: on his way to Rome to receive the pallium, Elfsin caught cold in the Alps and died.

THE FAITH catechism has arrived at the St. Mark Bookstore. We expect a review article in the July /August LION. This book appears to be a competent survey of Orthodox Christian teaching. This book is helpful, accurate, elementary, and contemporary in its references. For more depth on any number of topics read Ware, Orthodox Way, also available in the St. Mark Bookstore.

Church Womens' Announcements
Kathryn Reeves, Church Women President, would like to announce plans for our summer and fall activities:

The annual Craft Fair, Yard Sale, and English Tea will be held on Saturday September 20, 1997. We have decided to hold the fair earlier this year in the earnest hope that the yard sale volunteers will not have to stand out in the cold and sleet. One of the craft projects we are undertaking involves a creative recycling of men's neckties. Anyone who has a few old neckties collecting dust in your closets is encouraged to donate them to the Church Women. Please leave the ties at the church in the box provided at your earliest convenience.

Sometime in early October we are planning a group trip to Glen Eyrie in Colorado Springs to partake of their renowned English Tea. The cost per person is \$6.58, and a nominal fee for the rent of the room. We would have our own space and plenty of time for Christian fellowship. The Teas are held Monday through Saturday at 2:00 p.m. All who are interested in attending the tea please call Kathryn Reeves, at 765-4311. Please suggest which Saturday in October you would be free to attend. We hope several of the church women will be able to go.

Money will be sent to the St. Nicholas Childrens' home in Romania & the OCOC.

The Church Women were not able to elect a Secretary. The duties for secretary are: taking and posting the minutes of meetings, and providing greeting cards to be sent to the sick and other occasions when cards are appropriate. Anyone who is interested please let us know.

Apparently there are two or three parents who would attend Sunday Mass more often if the Nursery were staffed with a infant sitter on Sunday mornings. If anyone is interested in this idea, please call Kathryn Reeves. The idea is not to provide a way for one of our teenagers to blow off Church attendance by sitting in the nursery!

THE SACRED WISH LIST announced last month has been reduced 1) because one of the wishes was fulfilled : the rafters got cleaned by a platoon of angels and 2) because the list contained an unauthorized petition: painting the faded, exterior of the building will be done by some other force than wish fulfillment. We also add : paving for the back lot so that the weeds are suppressed and some cars can park there. The pipe organ will be turned 90 degrees in July. The local parish Hymnal Supplement idea is going forward.

We remember being appointed to a "Western Rite Hymnal Committee" at the Antiochian Convention in Arlington, Virginia in July 1991. So far, the Committee has not found a time or place, or agreed on the shape of the table, for its first meeting!



Saints Peter & Paul are observed on June 29 which is a Sunday this year. St. Peter was first head of the Church at Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians and where the Christians were first called Catholic before the end of the first Century. St. Paul was met by Jesus on the road to Damascus and was Baptised there in a house on the Street called Straight, where the Patriarchal headquarters of the Patriarchate of Antioch and the East has been located for more than a thousand years. Ss. Peter and Paul are uniquely OUR Saints, inspite of the fact that they were killed in Rome by the Italians.

The LION is For Members Only of St. Mark's Parish. USA

Subscriptions are \$ 10 a year.

The LION is not an official publication of any entity.

The views stated herein are not necessarily those of any persons, living or dead.

Deborah C. Connely, staff photographer.



The Lion

St. Mark's Parish
1405 So Vine Street
Denver, CO 80210-2336
Address correction requested

PATRIARCH ATHENAGORAS INST LIBRARY
2311 HEARST AVENUE
BERKELEY CA 94709
7/98

